Interview with William A. Crawford

Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

WILLIAM A. CRAWFORD

Interviewed by: William W. Moss

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Courtesy of the John F. Kennedy Library

Q: Ambassador Crawford, in reading your biography in the Biographic Register, I see that you were a Career Minister, and that when the Kennedy administration came in, you were head of the Research and Analysis Office for the Sino-Soviet Bloc. Is that correct?

CRAWFORD: Correct on the latter. However, I was not a career minister, but an FSO-1 [Foreign Service officer, Class One, Department of State] when I was appointed as minister to Romania. After leaving there, I also held the personal rank of minister while serving as Special Assistant for International Affairs to SACEUR [Supreme Allied Commander Europe].

Q: Right. In your position as head of the Research and Analysis Office for the Sino- Soviet Bloc, let me ask you how you saw the Kennedy administration taking over in the State Department, with particular reference, say, to Roger Hilsman, who came in as head of INR [Bureau of Intelligence and Research]?

CRAWFORD: Well, it took over with considerable impact. The appointment of Roger Hilsman, who came to us from the Library of Congress, was greeted by everyone with

great interest and some uncertainty. We knew him to be a bright young New Frontiersman with a fine record as a soldier and a scholar. We also knew him to be an activist who had the President's confidence. We expected that there might be some rapid changes, and there were. INR was soon to face substantial cuts in staff and to acquire that “lean and hungry” look so admired by the new administration. The staff of my own office [Office of Research and Analysis for the Sino-Soviet Bloc] was cut almost in half—from over one hundred down to some sixty members—within the next year. And yet, I think we got out more work of substance than ever before, and with a much sharper focus.

Q: Was this because of the transfer of the NIS [NationaIntelligence Survey] to CIA [Central Intelligence Agency]?

CRAWFORD: To some extent, yes. Of course, we lost some of our functions in basic research when the NIS was transferred to the CIA: but we acquired others that were to prove more exciting. We were now asked to give our principal attention to producing policy-oriented papers for the Secretary of State and for the White House. We were to keep these papers fairly brief, and they were to be addressed to subjects of direct interest to the policy-makers. We consequently found ourselves producing fewer basic studies, but many more short and timely papers outlining policy alternatives on matters of key interest. The usual recipients, who were also often the requesters, were the geographic bureaus, the policy planning staff of the Department, the NSC [National Security Council] and the White House. We were under stiffer pressures, but in dealing with central issues for such a select audience, we found ourselves getting a great deal more satisfaction out of our work than before. And despite the cutbacks, we seemed to find more time to devote to the actual preparation and writing of papers, even at my level. All in all, I think our change of direction proved not only more stimulating for us, but more useful to Uncle Sam.

Q: All right. Two of the events that occurred in the first year of the Kennedy administration, before you went to Romania, of course, were the Bay of Pigs and the Vienna meeting.

CRAWFORD: Yes.

Q: Did you have any relationship with either of these events? Wathere any input from your department?

CRAWFORD: Only in a somewhat peripheral fashion. I recall some meetings requiring estimates to be developed on just what the possibilities were of Castro's [Fidel Castro] overthrow from within—and what the reactions might be within Cuba if this occurred.

Q: At what time was this—at what point in time?

CRAWFORD: This, I suppose, must have been in the very early days othe administration, that is in early '61.

Q: How extensively were you aware of what was transpiring,developing?

CRAWFORD: I wasn't aware of anything to suggest that our government was involved. But because the subject of a possible internal uprising was being addressed with such interest, we naturally wondered a little if perhaps something was going on.

Q: Yes. Well, one of the things that the administration, of course, has been taken to task for is not being critical enough of this plan as it was developed.

CRAWFORD: As I say, I had no hint of any plan—or of anythinoperational involving our government.

Q: Did you sense any apprehension in the State Department over thithing that was developing?

CRAWFORD: Not really, because it wasn't clear enough to me, or to colleagues at my level, I believe, that anything was afoot or actually impending. However, since Mr.

Cummings [Hugh S. Cummings] was focusing sharply on the issue, I presume that those at his level may have known more.

Q: Right. More directly pertinent to your area, were you also assessing the possible reactions of the bloc to a move to overthrow Castro?

CRAWFORD: I have forgotten specifically. So many other things were going on at that time. But it is quite likely, as that was our function. For example, to illustrate the kind of time which the new administration expected from us at the outset, we were asked to prepare overnight an important paper for Secretary Rusk's [Dean Rusk] first staff meeting. I got a call from Hugh Cummings the prior evening saying the Secretary wanted for the next morning an analysis of Khrushchev's [Nikita S. Khrushchev] speech to the CPSU [Communist Party of the Soviet Union] Central Committee at that time...

Q: On wars of national liberation?

CRAWFORD: ...on wars of national liberation, and an assessment of its implications for U.S. policy. So we worked all night and had it on the Secretary's desk that morning. Apparently he was so pleased with the result that he also had it circulated to the members of the Cabinet for their first meeting, which I believe was scheduled for later that day. All this was highly interesting to me for the new tone that was set. Here, for the first time, the Kennedy administration was meeting officially, and here was the Secretary calling on the research side to produce a paper of this quality and timely interest as a matter of urgency. This was the sort of thing to which we were not particularly accustomed in the rather routine way the office had been operating before.

Q: Yes. Well, looking back on that piece of advice or on that paper with hindsight and all that's gone in the past ten years and Vietnam and the whole Southeast Asia situation and so on, how do you see it now?

CRAWFORD: Well, I think the speech did announce a new stage, if you will, in heightened Soviet tactics with regard to the use of guerrilla warfare and so on. Not that the idea was a new one, because wars of national liberation had long been viewed in Communist theory as “just wars” deserving every support. But we did see this speech to coincide with increasing Soviet emphasis upon North Vietnamese developments, particularly since the marked step-up in Vietcong terrorism around Saigon beginning with the fall of 1959. Then, I think you'll recall that in the fall of 1960, the announcement was made that a national liberation front was being established in South Vietnam by the...

Q: December of 1960.

CRAWFORD: December, was it? I'd forgotten. Yes, November, December. And so Khrushchev's speech seemed to fill the bill, so far as the situation in Vietnam was concerned, affirming, as we saw it, a heightened emphasis on the part of the international Communist strategy, with regard to the use of this kind of technique.

Q: What about an assessment of the way that the administration responded to this now? I think there's a growing feeling that perhaps we were a bit naive about the thing, perhaps a bit too glib and smart in our answer to this challenge. How would you see it?

CRAWFORD: Well, there's still no question in my mind that the Vietcong threat was growing and supported by the north. However, my general impression was, and remains, that we were then inclined to overemphasize the purely military aspects of the problem as well as military solutions for dealing with it, and for much too long to underemphasize or even disregard the grassroots political techniques which the Communists were using to establish their power in the villages in Vietnam. I should add, however, that although I was out there briefly in 1959, that wasn't my primary area of responsibility.

Q: Right. Let's turn then to the Vienna trip and Khrushchev anwhat your office did in the way of preparation for that.

CRAWFORD: Well, we prepared a number of background papers, as recall.

Q: Assessment of follow-up?

CRAWFORD: And assessment of follow-up.

Q: And the squeeze was beginning to be put on Berlin also at thipoint now? What was your role in reacting to that?

CRAWFORD: As a matter of fact, I was away from Washington during the Vienna meeting and some of the Berlin events. In the late spring of 1961, I was assigned to join Ambassador Harriman [W. Averell Harriman] when the delegation was sent out to Geneva to handle the Laos question. I spent several months there, and consequently I wasn't involved too closely in the Vienna and Berlin affairs.

Q: Would you describe that? The mythology of that event has Harriman going over there, discovering that he has a monstrous staff and sending everybody home so that he can get the job done.

CRAWFORD: Yes, that occurred a little later. I was out there for two or three months, although I was really supposed to go for only a month or two. If there was too large a staff to begin with, I wasn't particularly conscious of it. We were a group that was there to deal with a certain situation, and there were naturally quite a few people from Defense, et cetera. Chet Cooper [Chester L. Cooper] who was giving Ambassador Harriman the daily rundowns from the CIA end, carried on, of course, throughout the whole thing, and I guess he would be among the most knowledgeable experts to consult.

Q: Well, he's done it.

CRAWFORD: Yes, he's done it in his book apparently.

Q: He's marvelous.

CRAWFORD: I haven't read it yet; I want—I've got to get hold of it.

Q: It's really marvelous reading. But let me ask you a specifiquestion about your own role?

CRAWFORD: I'm afraid I would have very little to add. I was covering the Soviet end and was responsible for liaison with the Soviet mission and with other missions on Soviet-related matters. I also served as interpreter occasionally for Ambassador Harriman, and for the Secretary when he came over, at some meetings with Gromyko [Andrei A. Gromyko] and that kind of thing.

Q: Would you describe one or two of those meetings? It might be useful to know who was there, who said what—not necessarily specifics, but...

CRAWFORD: I don't recall, really, who said what. There was a small luncheon or two, and the atmosphere was generally correct and somewhat formal. Ambassador Harriman himself, being an old hand at dealing with these people, is usually very direct, frank and blunt. He was very careful to avoid simply making debating points with them, as he was interested in getting results. He handled the meetings extremely well. And, of course, the Secretary did too—he was always very straight and direct with them. The problems were difficult ones, of course, and progress was slow.

Q: Yes. Did you get any impression of how the Secretary himselfelt about the meetings after he...

CRAWFORD: Simply that they were generally useful and exploratory fothe most part.

Q: So much of the Laos thing hinged on the capacity or the willingness of the Soviet Union to back up the Laos neutrality—to help enforce it.

CRAWFORD: Yes.

Q: And later it was felt that they were either not able to or nowilling to. Do you have any insight into this?

CRAWFORD: Well, no special insight, but they obviously weren't always able to do what they wanted out there, inasmuch as the Chinese Communists played a great role too, and...

Q: Do you think it's the fact that they share an interest and share a prestige and responsibility in the area that makes them unable to do it?

CRAWFORD: I think so up to a point, yes.

Q: How about the nature of the area as well?

CRAWFORD: You mean the geography of it?

Q: Well, the geography and the social melange that you have dowthere.

CRAWFORD: Well, all that enters the picture, the fact that you had in Laos a divided country with a neutralist leader and with three groups really playing something of a role. And it's a strange and weird little place, with a strong Buddhist influence.

Q: You think anybody could impose a kind of control over the area?

CRAWFORD: I don't know that anybody from the outside necessarilcould for long.

Q: Let me go on then from that, and ask you about the circumstances of your appointment as Minister to Romania. This was at a time when we did not have an embassy, but it was a legation.

CRAWFORD:: That's right; it was a legation. And it was one of the last legations that we had. Our missions in Budapest, Bucharest and Sofia were still all legations, and the only other one left was Yemen. Our Balkan legations were holdovers from before the war, when we already had embassies elsewhere in Eastern Europe—in Prague and Warsaw, and in Moscow and Belgrade. And after the war, because of the Communist takeover, since we didn't want to dignify the new Communist regimes in the Balkans by raising our missions there, they remained that way. So, I went over as Minister in charge of the legation, and remained there for about four years. And a certain number of things developed in the course of my time there, as a result of which we did, in the case of Romania, raise the mission to an embassy.

Q: Do you know how you were chosen, or why?

CRAWFORD: Nobody ever explained it to me. However, I was a Russian language officer with long experience in Eastern European and international Communist affairs. I assume the Department thought it appropriate to recommend me because of my special qualifications.

Q: What happens? Do you just get called into the Secretary's officone day and...

CRAWFORD: I was simply called up by the Director General of the Foreign Service and told that they would like to see me at the White House the next day. This must have been in August or so of '61. So I asked, “Well, who will I see at the White House? And—oh, what was his name?

Q: Dungan [Ralph A. Dungan]?

CRAWFORD: Dungan, yes. Ralph Dungan. And so I went over and had a half an hour or so with Ralph Dungan. And we chatted about this and that, and he asked me many questions. He was particularly concerned about a story recently carried in the New York Times on the political advisability of encouraging an opening to the left in Italy. He had

seen Ambassador Reinhardt's [G. Frederick Reinhardt] messages on the subject and wanted to know my views on Nenni [Pietro Nenni] and so on.

Q: He actually asked you about the Communist effort at that time?

CRAWFORD: Yes, he did. And I told him that I hadn't been following Italian affairs too closely, as my present job was to deal with Eastern Europe and Soviet Union.

Q: Rather than Italy...

CRAWFORD: But that, so far as Nenni was concerned, I would be inclined to be very cautious indeed before moving too far in his direction, because he was an old Comintern [Communist International] hand who had played an important role throughout the entire international Communist movement. My estimate of him was that he was a very cagey and very able guy who had not really changed his spots despite his recent protestations, and that I wouldn't want to rely upon him in the present situation.

Q: How hard was Dungan pushing this, or was he...

CRAWFORD: Not too hard. He was just sounding me out, I think, to get my ideas. At any rate, we had a pleasant and lively discussion. And then, about two or three months later, I was again called in to the Director General's office and was told that I would be given the mission.

Q: And how did you react to that?

CRAWFORD: Well, that was fine with me. Romania was a place which at that time nobody was very conscious of, as it had been in the deep freeze politically for some years. So I didn't expect it to be especially exciting. Yet my whole specialization had been in Eastern European affairs—I had started out as a Russian language officer back in 1944 when our wartime program first began, and had served in Moscow, then in Paris on Communist matters, later in Prague, and finally in my present job. So, while I anticipated nothing very

dramatic, I was sure that as a specialist I'd find life in Romania most interesting. In fact, it proved to be far more exciting than I could have imagined, which shows how hard it is to predict about a post. Anyhow, my reaction was, fine.

Q: What sort of preparation did you undergo...

CRAWFORD: Then?

Q: Yes...before you went over?

CRAWFORD: Well, I got hold of what reading I could, looking into recent party congresses and that kind of thing. I also gave special attention to the unusually interesting RCP [Romanian Communist Party] plenum then in session. Most of the material I got from the Department. There wasn't a great deal published outside that I found to be that relevant. I had less than two months before I went over, so I crammed on the language at the Foreign Service Institute and did a bit of reading and consulting.

Q: I have two dates for your appointment.

CRAWFORD: You do?

Q: One is late November and the other is late December.

CRAWFORD: Well, I was appointed in late November, and then, as I recall, around the eighteenth or nineteenth of December, I was sworn in. And I think it was the day or so after that when I first went to see the President.

Q: Could you recount that meeting for us?

CRAWFORD: That meeting?

Q: Yes.

CRAWFORD: It took place in the Oval Room, and it lasted about fifteen minutes. It was just for him to meet me. And there were many cameras there to record the event, although I never was able to get a picture of it after all that.

Q: Maybe we can find one in the file for you.

CRAWFORD: Well, that would be fine if you could.

Q: I'll ask somebody to have a box opened.

CRAWFORD: I would be delighted. And so we talked at his desk for about five minutes with the cameras going and then for another ten or so afterwards. We exchanged amenities, and he asked me some questions about Romania. About all that I recall of particular interest was that he seemed to be rather surprised that Romanians were Latins and that Romanian was a Latin language.

Q: Yes.

CRAWFORD: And yet he told me he had been to Romania himself in the summer of 1939, I believe, when his father was ambassador to London. He had spent two or three days there then, and seemed to recall with considerable enthusiasm how beautiful the Romanian women were. Well, that's about it. It was just a once-over lightly. He was most charming and agreeable, and I was glad I'd had the chance to meet him.

Q: I've heard a great deal about the importance of this personameeting of ambassadors with the President.

CRAWFORD: Well, there's no question about it; it is very important indeed, especially for his ambassador. You can then say, “Yes, when I saw him, the President...” which reinforces your position a good deal in dealing with the government to which you're going. And also, subsequently, if you see the President again and have fuller talks with him,

as I was fortunate enough to do, you've laid a foundation for understanding each other better, and other things can result. And I contrast the way Kennedy handled this with the way President Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson] did subsequently, who had little time for his ambassadors. And I really think that it's highly worthwhile for the President to give of his time to establish this kind of personal relationship with his ambassador. It can be very productive, not only in terms of reinforcing the ambassador's hand when he's representing the President abroad, but quite possibly in terms of the things they can accomplish together within our government afterwards.

Q: Did you have any particular instructions, going out?

CRAWFORD: He didn't give me any particular instructions.

Q: What about the Secretary?

CRAWFORD: Just to keep us from having problems was the main thing:keep the flag flying, keep the lid on. And that was about it.

Q: I guess the next appropriate question is, how were you receivein Bucharest?

CRAWFORD: Well, I was received there very well. I had the possibility to meet, to call on many of the top people within the government at the ministerial level, and I did so. This had not always been done so extensively before, I found out later. And I was helped by the fact that I spoke fluent French. French happens to be the second language in Romania, and although all of those to whom I was speaking were Communists, many of them—the Communist movement having been underground before the war, and having really operated abroad as a section of the French Communist Party—had spent the prewar years and often the war years in France. And quite a number of them came back with French wives. Anyhow they spoke French very well. As a result, I found that when it became known that I could speak French; we dispensed with an interpreter most of the time. In a Communist country, this is a very helpful thing, because it encourages

everybody to speak out more freely, and it doesn't give you both the feeling that the police are keeping tabs on you to quite the same degree. So the interviews that I had turned out to be fairly informal and relaxed affairs, and I got to know quite a bit about many of the people with whom I was subsequently to deal.

Q: Would you, for my benefit and for the record, pronounce the nameof these people— the party chief, for instance.

CRAWFORD: Right. Gheorghiu-Dej [Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej](Gay-#rghiu-Dezh)

Q: Gheorghiu-Dej.

CRAWFORD: Gheorghiu-Dej, yes. H was both Secretary General of thparty and Head of State.

Q: Yes, and the other chap—what is it?—Ceausescu [NicolaCeausescu]?

CRAWFORD: Ceausescu. Nicolae Ceausescu. (Chow-sh#s-coo)

Q: Okay. Now, in looking over the files that I have; I run into very little information during 1962 of any particular interest. Does this reflect what was going on, or were there important developments in '62?

CRAWFORD: In Romania?

Q: Right, in Romania.

CRAWFORD: Well, there were some important developments in '62. The kettle was bubbling. But the real showdowns with Moscow didn't occur until '63 and '64. Yet to give you a picture of what was going on then, I should first let you have very briefly a little background on the fifties. Because the sixties were in great contrast with the fifties, which had really been a period of the deep-freeze, if you will. Nevertheless, there were three

major developments during the fifties which had great bearing on the sixties. At the outset of the fifties, Dej was already the party leader, but most of those in charge around him were an outfit of ex-Muscovites—people like Teohari Georgescu, Vasile Luca and Ana Pauker. They were the Romanians of the Comintern vintage, all Stalinist toadies and hardliners, who had spent the war years in Moscow and come back with the Soviet army in '44-'45. However, in '52, just before Stalin's [Joseph V. Stalin] death, this group was ousted by Dej and his brand of home-grown Communists who had long been his closest friends and associates and had shared many years with him in prison. Ana Pauker and her ilk wound up under house arrest, and she died several years later. The new leadership was of another breed with a strong nationalist orientation—Communists who had spent virtually no time in Moscow...

Q: But in Paris.

CRAWFORD: In Paris to a degree, but only those at the second echelon. The nine at the very highest level who comprised the Politburo [Political Bureau] were almost all ex-trade union men who had been in prison in Romania with Dej from about '33 to '44. They hadn't had the chance to get away much to Moscow or anywhere else, and it was they who took over and ran things. So that you have the expulsion of the Muscovite variety of Communist and the take-over of the party leadership by Dej and his homegrown variety in '52. This was an important watershed. And then in '56, you have the Soviet decision to abolish the so-called Sovroms, or mixed economic companies, which were the means whereby the Soviets had dominated every phase of economic activity, and the Soviets had held a controlling interest in each. And then finally, in '58, you had the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Romania, probably as a reward for good behavior during the Hungarian uprising. So with the homegrown variety of Communists taking over in the early fifties, followed by the removal of most Soviet economic controls, and then by the withdrawal of the Soviet armed presence in the late fifties, the stage was set, if the Romanians wanted to take advantage of it, for moving in new directions.

So, when you say you hadn't noticed that there was very much going on in '62, actually a good deal had already taken place. Moreover, against this setting, the Romanians had proceeded to make a very important decision in '59. They had adopted a six-year plan which was designed to transform the country from a primarily agrarian economy to a balanced industrial-agrarian economy with a diversified modern industry. And by the time I reached there in '62, this plan was already getting into high gear and working out very well indeed. In fact, the Romanian economy was moving forward at one of the fastest rates of any country in Europe. Of course, this isn't altogether surprising, because as one of the more backward, it was starting from a lower base. Yet industrialization was now moving at a great clip, with primarily western assistance, and when I arrived, there were already some four hundred West European engineers and technicians in Romania setting up industrial plants of one kind or other.

Q: They were engaging in whole-plant importation from WesterEurope, is that right?

CRAWFORD: That's right. They were, already.

Q: Yes.

CRAWFORD: And this included petrochemicals and tires, hydroelectristations, paper plants, and eve Romanian steel.

Q: This would be at Galatz. n the machine building and machine tool industries; and it was later to include a new steel combine which was going to double the production of

CRAWFORD: Yes, this was to be at Galatz. And so forth. Anyway, there was a great movement afoot in new directions to establish a strong modern industrial base that was going to transform the country. They were now well launched on the program for two or three years and growing even a bit heady with success. So this economic transformation

was the most important thing that was happening, and it held the key to other major impending developments in '62 and beyond.

Q: All right. In that period, were you beginning to get feelerfrom the Romanians for perhaps American participation in this?

CRAWFORD: Yes we were. The new Romanian Minister to Washington haalready made an approach in late March of '62...

Q: Right. And his name is...

CRAWFORD: Balaceanu [Petre Balaceanu]. After having called on Secretary Hodges [Luther H. Hodges] initially, to pay his respects, he'd been encouraged to go and see Behrman [Jack N. Behrman] over at [Department of] Commerce, who was Hodges' deputy, about what Romania might be interested in buying from us. And so he had presented Behrman with a list of ten plants valued at some $200 million for which the Romanians wanted Commerce to authorize export licenses.

Q: Was the synthetic rubber plant on that list?

CRAWFORD: That's right. The two synthetic rubber plants—one the polybutadiene, and the other the polyisoprene—were among them. So these were presented in March to the Department of Commerce. And in May, the Department of Commerce said, “Sorry, but we can't approve licenses of nine out of the ten, and we're going to need more information before we can consider the tenth, et cetera.” So the Romanians got no farther, and when I saw Balaceanu in the summer of '62 when he came back to Bucharest on holiday, he was pretty depressed. He'd made his big pitch, and he'd been told no soap. So much for their approach to us at that time. And to illustrate just how small was our trade then, our total trade turnover with Romania was but slightly above one million dollars, whereas Romania's turnover that year with West Germany alone, with whom they had no diplomatic

relations yet, had reached some $150 million. So although her trade with our NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] allies was growing rapidly, it was going nowhere with us.

However, other things were occurring, for the Romanians were running into serious problems with the Russians. In June of '62, Khrushchev made a state visit to Romania, and he spent a week or so traveling around the country with Dej to see the new Romanian industry. And, from all the reports that we got, he not only didn't like what he saw but told the Romanians in pretty abusive language that they were on the wrong track and shouldn't be going ahead with this kind of thing. We heard that he was very insulting to Dej, and as Dej had to take all this on his home grounds, he was very sour in turn. Apparently the purpose—as well as the net result—of the visit, was to tell the Romanians to climb off their effort towards industrialization and to get back to doing mainly what they'd always done so well as a breadbasket for Europe.

So there was this sort of pressure, on the one hand, by early summer, and for the rest of the year we had reports of growing differences between Bucharest and Moscow on matters relating to CEMA [Council for Economic Mutual Assistance]. This all bubbled beneath the surface for a while and eventually came to a boil at the CEMA Executive Committee session in Moscow in February of 1963. At this important meeting, the Russians pressed their proposals for a so-called Socialist international division of labor, which amounted to an effort on Moscow's part to have certain specialized tasks allotted to each of the Eastern European countries, these to be decided upon really by CEMA itself, and then to carry out a very tight coordination of national plans based upon such specialization. And apparently the effort was made to get this generally accepted while at the same time telling Romania that the industrial projects that had been incorporated in the six-year plan were not things that really, at second glance, ought to be carried forward or encouraged. However, the Romanians took a strong stand and successfully resisted the idea of any such specialization being decided by CEMA, or of changing their own objectives. They flatly refused to budge, and in March of '63 convened a much ballyhooed party plenum to confirm their stand. However, continuing pressure was put on them.

And then at a crucial meeting of CEMA party and state heads held in Moscow in July, Dej finally won out, and Khrushchev's plan for a supranational CEMA central planning organization was quietly buried. We had had reports since the fall of '62 that Khrushchev was pressured hard for such a supranational planning body, but that the Romanians were stoutly resisting.

So, during the course of 1962, you had a real pressure play developing on the part of Moscow to alter the new direction of the Romanian economy which it had apparently approved in principle back in '59 or '60. Because when the six-year plan was decided upon, it was presumably done with Moscow's okay—if a very reluctant okay. But at that time, Moscow had had a couple of fairly successful initial years developing its virgin lands program, and so the necessity for Romania remaining a breadbasket to the same degree then seemed perhaps less pressing. So Moscow may have said, “Okay. We don't think this is necessarily a terribly good idea, but if you insist, why, go ahead and try your hand at it.” Well, the Romanians had tried their hand at it, and meanwhile Moscow had several very bad years in the virgin lands and was now facing an increasingly difficult agricultural situation. And so Khrushchev came down to tell them to call off the show. But by this time the rate of Romanian industrial development was reaching the point where the Romanians were not to be dissuaded. They had begun to learn a good deal from their recent contacts with the West, and they had the bit in their teeth.

Already their pattern of trade was changing considerably. Back in '59-'60, it had been about 80 percent with the bloc, but by the end of '62 this was reduced to about 65 percent. And this was another matter bothering the Russians, because the Romanians were now exporting their foodstuffs mainly to the West to pay for western industrial plants. They were sending Western Europe large quantities of their corn and wheat, and lots of pork, and geese to Strasbourg for “foie gras.” And about half of their tractor production, and other farm equipment, was all going to the West. Well, this meant that the countries like Czechoslovakia and Poland and East Germany, which had been depending—as had the Soviet Union—on Romanian foodstuffs, were put in a bind, because they then had to look

for them elsewhere. And for the bloc countries of the northern tier, it meant they either had to get them from the Soviet Union or from the West, and in the latter case, spend some of their scarce foreign exchange to do so.

On the other hand, the Romanians were thinking along the same lines, figuring, “What's the point in our selling corn, for example, to Poland to feed Polish hogs so that Poland can then export her hams to the West in return for the foreign exchange she needs to import Western plant equipment?” The Romanians decided they might as well be doing the same themselves, and this is really what was going on. So the bloc countries were beginning to feel the pinch resulting from Romania's dealings with the West and the changing pattern of her foreign trade, as a means of carrying out her industrialization program. By the end of '62, we were beginning to get the flak from the CEMA meetings and to see that there was a real hassle going on. Moreover, hoist as they now were on their nationalist petard, the Romanians were showing a lot more guts than we had really given them credit for.

On the internal side in '62, we also began to see the onset of a derussification campaign that was soon to snowball. When I arrived, for example, the Russians had already been taken somewhat to task by the RCP plenum the month before, when party history was rewritten in a strongly nationalistic, and implicitly anti-Russian, manner. Then, several months later, the enormous statue of Stalin was quietly removed from Stalin Park. Nothing was ever mentioned in the paper about it, but a tent was raised around it and Stalin's statue disappeared overnight. The park was then renamed—but for no living person, because they'd decided against that kind of thing—and so Stalin disappeared. Of course, this roughly coincided with developments elsewhere at this time throughout the bloc. But before long, other derussification measures were being carried out within the country, which I could speak about.

Q: Okay. Now, you have, in response to this Romanian independence, some attempts by the Soviet Union to bring them into line, among which are a visit by Khrushchev himself in '63. Did he actually come, or did he find out...

CRAWFORD: Yes, a secret visit by Khrushchev. We had good evidence that he did. And this was believed by most of the other missions there, including the Yugoslavs. The meeting was apparently held in Transylvania, up close to the Yugoslav border. I don't recall at the moment what all the pieces of evidence were, but I know the evidence was very strong. I've forgotten the approximate date, but I think it was somewhere in the middle of '63. It was part of the continuing Soviet pressure campaign reacting to Romanian resistance that spring to its efforts to reorganize CEMA. You'll recall that following the CEMA meeting in Moscow in February of that year, the Romanian Central Committee had met in March and categorically reaffirmed its opposition to Moscow's position on CEMA. At that meeting, they came out with a strong statement opposing the idea of any supranational authority within CEMA, insisting on equal treatment for all members and noninterference in each other's affairs, and bilateral plans rather than joint plans, et cetera.

Q: And this occasioned your report back to Washington?

CRAWFORD: We reported all this, and the meetings which were then promptly held around the country for everybody to study and learn the lessons of what had gone on. So it seemed to us at this point that if the Romanians had not won out, at least there was a standoff, and that it could well be that the Russians would apply further pressures, which they did. One couldn't tell which way it might go, but the Romanians had made it perfectly clear that they were not going to go back on their industrialization program. So we proceeded to make a broad in-depth analysis of the situation, accompanied by specific recommendations for U.S. policy.

Q: Okay. And in June you came back to the Department again with another report in which you outlined some inconsistencies in U.S. trade policy and asked some specific questions as to just what we were to do, asking if we should show sympathy for this independent stance or should we support the steel mill at Galatz, loosening trade restrictions, working

out perhaps some contingency plans for selective abolition of controls on exports and so on. What...

CRAWFORD: Yes, we sent the Department another comprehensive analysis of where we stood, made some more strong recommendations, and asked for a policy review.

Q: Right. Possibility of a trade delegation.

CRAWFORD: Yes. That's right. That is, we had reached the conclusion that the Romanians were now going to continue their resistance to the Soviet pressures, on the one hand, and that Romanian trade with other Western countries had developed to the point where we were being left far behind. Our view was that we ought to do something to reward Romania for her efforts towards independence, and at the same time, to provide her with a bit of reinsurance in case the risks she was taking should place her in very real difficulties as far as Russia was concerned. So we came up with a broad review and a number of policy recommendations, as I recall, around July 1, and these finally got the Department and the U.S. government focusing seriously on Romania.

Q: This is a question that I have: To what extent does the Department anticipate a development like this, and to what extent does it really have to be beaten over the head by the ambassador or somebody else to start hard planning?

CRAWFORD: Well, I think that the desk is aware usually of what is going on, and it does its best to persuade, but the Department is an amorphous thing that does have to be beaten over the head. When I look back on the several years which this process took, it seems to me that about two-thirds of my work was really negotiating with the Department, and about one-third with the Romanians. My main problem was to convince the Department that things really were changing, and that the Romanians really were carrying on this kind of resistance to Soviet pressures and attempting to assert their own independence, at least in the economic field; and that somebody wasn't just pulling marionettes by a string for optical effect. First, I had to make the Department accept

the fact that something important was going on—and then persuade it that we should really be doing something about it. It's awfully easy back in the Department to recall the situation in a country as it was when you were there, and especially in the case of a Communist country where things usually move very slowly, and are unlikely to change much. If you had served in Romania, for example, in the mid-fifties in the climate of the deep freeze, you'd find it extremely hard to imagine that any significant changes could be really occurring. So that's the problem we faced. However, by this time we had reached the point where we thought we had all the evidence we needed. We'd been reporting it right along, but now our task was to tie it all together persuasively in a comprehensive summation, and to weigh in with strong recommendations as to what to do about it. Now you say, to what extent does it require the personal intervention of the ambassador? Well, we made our new presentation and recommendations in early July, for which we were warmly commended. And by late July, the Department had in fact accepted our analysis of where the Romanians were going—and our conclusion that we ought to do something about it. So the decks were finally cleared for action. And then some things happened which precipitated the whole process. Shall I go on?

Q: Yes, go ahead. We've got another five minutes on this tape. Let me ask you, in the context of what we were just talking about, could you comment particularly on your desk officer and on Foy Kohler [Foy D. Kohler] and their management of things in your area.

CRAWFORD: Well, we got excellent support from Harold Vedeler [Harold C. Vedeler], who was director of the Office of Eastern European Affairs and in charge of our day-to-day business. And I had fine support from the desk too, so that I felt a very close and sympathetic response there. The difficulty was really in getting people higher up to...

Q: Specifically.

CRAWFORD: Well, I don't mean we had any problem with Foy Kohler or Bill Tyler [William R. Tyler, Jr.]. As a matter of fact, I think maybe Foy was then in Moscow or it may have

been a little later. But they were very understanding. It just takes time for a situation to clarify, and quite a long time to get things really hopping. Yet it wasn't really until Averell Harriman stepped in, at the higher level, to give things a push, that we did get hopping.

Q: All right. Now is this before or after the events of August?

CRAWFORD: This is during the events of August.

Q: Okay. Well, let's move, I think perhaps, to the Orville Freematrip first. Now this was around 4 August.

CRAWFORD: That's right.

Q: Why Freeman instead of Hodges?

CRAWFORD: Well, we just hadn't reached the point of sending over secretary of commerce.

Q: Would that be flaunting it just a little too much?

CRAWFORD: And we couldn't have singled out Romania anyway at this juncture. Freeman apparently had a trip lined up to spend a few weeks in the Soviet Union, and a few days in Poland, and then he was going to allot three days to Romania. So he did so, and he spent three very active days in which he was warmly received by the Romanians. And I think he was most impressed by what he saw there. In fact, he told me after it was all over that he had been more impressed by the realistic manner in which the Romanians were approaching the reorganization of their agriculture than by anything that he'd seen in the Soviet Union or in Poland. Be that as it may, the visit did pay off in a number of other ways. The Romanians had recognized the importance of it even before he arrived. After all, this was the first officer of cabinet rank ever to pay a visit to Romania since the war.

So several days before his arrival, they stopped their jamming of our RFE [Radio Free Europe] and VOA [Voice of America] broadcasts.

Q: Both of them.

CRAWFORD: Both of them. And didn't resume them from that point on; nor have they done so since. So this was a tipoff to us right away that as a gesture of goodwill, they were prepared to take some positive steps in our direction in the hope that we might reciprocate. And although Freeman spent his two or three days traveling around the country, the political significance of the visit really lay in what happened in the course of his talk with Dej, which occurred on the evening of the final day of the visit.

Q: Let me ask you, there's a fairly extensive memorandum of the conversation in the file so I don't think that we need to go into the details of the Freeman-Dej talk, but if you would perhaps give us a little local color of that meeting. It was at the Eforia villa, wasn't it, in the evening?

CRAWFORD: That's right. It was at the Eforia villa, which was Dej's summer home not far from Constanta on the Black Sea coast. The entire Politburo was there, and the details, you say, you have. The local color is what you'd like mostly?

Q: Yes. What sort of people were these and how were they gettinalong?

CRAWFORD: Well, they were Romanians. I don't mean to be trite, buthat says a good deal.

Q: Well, what does it say?

CRAWFORD: In the first place, they're Latins, and as Latins they love a good time, love to live well, are reasonably hard workers, and are usually quite intelligent. Just to give you a sidelight on how well they like to live, I remember Dej himself telling me, following the visit to China of Maurer [Ion Gheorghe Maurer], the Prime Minister, that Maurer came back with

very glowing reports of the Chinese leadership and what an ascetic bunch they were. They apparently lived with very few frills and led a good, serious revolutionary life that didn't differ in many respects from that of the people themselves. Then Dej grinned and said, “Of course, that could never happen here.” How true. For example, Dej's own villa was something that any star from Hollywood could be proud of—a fabulous place, extremely modern, with floodlit gardens, and, of course, there overlooking the Black Sea. His villa in town was equally attractive and prepossessing.

Q: Why is it always a villa?

CRAWFORD: Well, they call it a villa, just as the Russians live in dachas, like country houses, really, that kind of thing. Anyhow, another example: Mauher is a great hunter, who will invite you up for diplomatic hunts in the Transylvanian forests in what were once the royal preserves. And probably, as in Carol's [King Carol II] day, you'll still have three hundred beaters beating the game out of the forests for you, and a private railroad train that takes you up there, and your own compartment, and you're well equipped by the Romanians. But you're not nearly so well equipped as the Prime Minister himself. The Prime Minister is not given the normal Romanian shot given to the diplomats, but his show happens to be Austrian; he wears an American parka; and his shotguns are a brace of English Purdeys so beautifully tooled and designed they probably cost an immense amount of money. In other words, these people like to live in style, and even among the Communist group today you still find some of the light-hearted characteristics that earned Romanians that famous quip before the war, when they were sometimes described not as a nation but a profession. They still like the good life.

So, getting back to Dej and his good life on the Black Sea, this was the type of atmosphere in which we found ourselves. Freeman and I were put up overnight at another beautiful Black Sea villa, and around two in the morning, after the evening's talks, we went out for a fine moonlight swim in the sea, with the Chief of Protocol following anxiously along the beach. Our main purpose was to agree on what we had understood to be the main points

covered that evening. We assumed the villa to be bugged, and since I was to have to go back to Bucharest the next day and do the actual reporting, I wanted to be sure that we were on the same line. So we would dive beneath the waves and come up for a question, and go down again. And this was our only consultation because the next morning, before he took off for Bulgaria, the Romanians had invited us to a breakfast to taste the wines from the nearby winery at Murfatlar. So, from nine to eleven that morning, we sampled all the varieties, and I was in great shape to write that telegram by the time I got back to Moscow.

Q: When you got back to Bucharest.

CRAWFORD: Bucharest.

Q: The second time you got...

CRAWFORD: I know. Well, having served in both, there arsimilarities.

Q: What was Freeman's reaction to the whole affair?

CRAWFORD: You'd have to ask him, of course, but he seemed very delighted with the whole reception. And from my standpoint it was extremely helpful. In the first place, we had a chance for a long go-round with Dej and his whole Politburo on the points that were reported. As you know, Dej affirmed in strong terms Romania's desire to carry on with her independent course. What's more, he made some important overtures to us for greater economic cooperation, including their desire to purchase some very specific and substantial items. It so happened that I was called back to Washington shortly afterwards and was able to accomplish a lot in terms of follow-up. By sheer coincidence (although perhaps not, as the Romanians must have known of my travel plans), I also had some extended conversations with the Deputy Foreign Minister Malitza [Mircea Malitza], who happened to be traveling to Washington on the same plane. This gave us a chance for

a lengthy and informal review of the status of U.S.-Romanian relations, which was very helpful in the light of the requests that Dej had last made to Freeman.

Q: All right. Well, Malitza came to Washington for the signing othe test ban treaty.

CRAWFORD: That's right.

Q: Okay. Now, you and he came back and he had a talk with Harriman.

CRAWFORD: He did. In fact, he had a couple of talks with Harriman.

Q: Yes. Was this at your suggestion and why was it...

CRAWFORD: It was at my suggestion that he see Harriman. Having served under Harriman in Moscow as well as at the Laos Conference, I knew him well, and I knew his general interest in things Eastern European. So I was anxious not only to have Malitza greeted by somebody at that level, but above all by Harriman himself, because I was sure that with his prestige and Eastern European clout, he could and would play a more influential role than others. And our Eastern European office felt exactly the same about it. So I asked Harriman to receive Malitza. He was very happy to oblige, and from then on played a central role in pressing the Department into action for a full-dress governmental review of our policy towards Romania. And, of course, it was he who later successfully negotiated our 1964 agreement with the Romanians.

Q: All right. And then you had a talk with the President on thtwenty-third. Do you recall?

CRAWFORD: I thought it was the twenty-second, perhaps.

Q: Twenty-second? My notes said the twenty-third; perhaps it was.I can check that out in the appointments list.

CRAWFORD: You're probably right.

Q: Do you recall that meeting and the things you talked about? Wdon't seem to have a memorandum.

CRAWFORD: No, there's no record at all of that meeting. I saw the President at eleven o'clock in the morning and I was with him almost an hour. There was nobody else present. Foolishly enough, I didn't make any record of it myself, but I recall very well what it was all about. The President was extremely interested in developments in Romania, and our talk for the most part was devoted to what we've just been discussing: first, Romania's recent attempts to assert its economic independence from Moscow; secondly, the changing pattern of its foreign trade moving more and more to the West; and finally, Dej's plea for American cooperation in support of these objectives. The President was much in favor of taking some steps in this direction. I described Balaceanu's $200 million shopping list for ten plants here, and how [Department of] Commerce had turned these down for licenses. And I went into considerable detail then on how our Western European allies had since gone ahead and sold them a majority of the plants concerned, as a result of which we were not only losing good business but failing to give the Romanians any reward for their independent stance.

The President said that he was very anxious to document this whole picture so that he could be in a stronger position vis-a-vis Congress in pressing for measures which would facilitate and strengthen our trade with Eastern Europe, which he very much favored. And he asked me if we couldn't get together concise documentation on the cases I had just described—what the Romanians had asked to buy here, what we had turned down, and what they had then proceeded to buy instead from Western Europe. I told him we were already in the process of pulling this information together in Bucharest, and that it was soon to reach Washington. So he picked up the phone and asked for Hodges at Commerce, but as Hodges wasn't there, he reached Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr. [Undersecretary of Commerce], and gave him the picture about our allies and the Romanian shopping list. He said he wanted to get this documentation pulled together, and

would like to have Commerce do so in conjunction with our legation. He wanted the matter pursued, and lined up an appointment for me to see FDR, Jr. the next day, which I did. I found the President to be strongly in favor of some action, but he was cautious about congressional reaction, and he wanted to be sure to have a good case. If we were going to move ahead with the Romanians, he first wanted to be able to show Congress that they had come to us for all these things without success; and after being turned down, were getting precisely—or just about—what they'd asked from us, from our good friends and allies, with whom they were now doing a thriving business, to wit, the West Germans, the French, the Italians, the British, and so on. In short, by this time they were all weighing in, with their trade developing at a rapid pace, while ours was still at a piddling level. So the President's general tack was that we don't want to be left behind on the business end, and we want to do what we can to reward Romania's efforts towards greater independence.

Q: Do you think there were any points at which he felt he was not thoroughly understanding or appreciative? Were there any things that seemed to bypass his understanding?

CRAWFORD: On the contrary, he was absolutely on his toes, asking all kinds of questions, and obviously terribly interested in the whole thing. And he was also very much abreast—much more so than I had expected—of some of the broader implications of Eastern European developments. I think this may be partly because, as I found later, the Export Control Review Board, which consisted of the secretaries of State and Commerce and Defense, had weighed in on August 9, just a few days earlier, with a report and recommendations to the President as to what ought to be done. And these, in turn, were in response to a Presidential memorandum they had received earlier that spring asking them to consider what steps we could take to encourage trade with Eastern Europe. So that all this apparently was very much on his mind when I saw him. In my talk with FDR, Jr., I was also made more aware of this—something that I hadn't really fully realized—that a good deal of consideration was actually being given to what could be done about furthering our trade with Eastern Europe. So when we met, the President apparently had under

consideration the memorandum of August 9 with its recommendations from the review board, one of which specifically envisaged developing programs for a sort of step-by-step approach to furthering trade with each country, in the light of the particular situations in those countries. And, as learned later, these recommendations were subsequently approved by the President several weeks after he saw me. They were approved in his memorandum of September 19 to the Review Board, with a statement not only strongly endorsing the recommendations made, but expressing the added hope that they would be pursued even more energetically than proposed. In other words, by his memorandum of September 19, he gave the program a real fillip of his own. And in so doing, he referred to the fact that the recent test ban treaty had given him some encouragement regarding developments with the Soviet Union, and that now we also had to think of the progress being made by our allies in dealing with Eastern Europe, and that we couldn't be left behind. So when he saw me in August, his approach was very much in character with what he was to sign several weeks later and encourage the Export Control Review Board to pursue.

I think he also recommended in his memorandum that authority for directing this program should be vested in one person, and he wanted suggestions as to who would be the best man. I even remember hearing the subject raised while I was in Washington, and some thought that FDR, Jr. might be the likely candidate, placed as he was at Commerce and bearing a name reflecting our old wartime relationship with the Soviet Union. Well, apparently nothing ever came of it because nobody was ever appointed to do this kind of thing, and the President died several months later. But I always felt that the successful talks which we had with the Romanians just a few months later owed much to my talk with the President. The Romanian picture had crystalized, Dej had made his pitch, and I happened to be in Washington (although ironically I was called back for something else). Malitza was here, but we were able to get together with Harriman. And I was able to see the President. And I do think my meeting with the President must have contributed in some

degree to his expressing himself as strongly as he did in his memorandum of September 19, which really set the wheels in motion for our future negotiations with Romania.

Q: You credited Harriman earlier with a particularly crucial role in this. How would you describe that role? What was it that he did that...

CRAWFORD: Well, he was the man at the upper level in the State Department who got the Secretary directly interested. His long experience with Eastern Europe gave him an authority and expertise in that area shared by almost no one else on the seventh floor. Whenever we felt a push was needed, we'd get to Harriman, and Harriman would see that things got done.

Q: So Rusk would listen to Harriman?

CRAWFORD: Rusk would listen particularly to Harriman. That's right, whereas had it come directly from the bureau head, I don't think we would have received nearly the same attention.

Q: Do you know if there were any other people that Rusk would listeto?

CRAWFORD: Hm-mm.

Q: This is an interesting line to pursue.

CRAWFORD: Well, I'm sure he listened to quite a few, but Harrimaheld a special position.

Q: Yes. Is there anybody who wouldn't listen to Harriman? Let mput it that way.

CRAWFORD: I think that everybody would listen to Harriman as a matter of fact. No, he was a very useful person to have in that job, just as Bohlen [Charles E. Bohlen[and Thomson [Llewellyn Thomson, Jr.] had been helpful on like matters in their seventh floor roles. For the Office of Eastern European Affairs, it was a windfall to have him there.

Because there isn't always somebody at that level with their interests at heart, who listens, and who's maybe even ahead of them on certain things, and in a position to get things moving. He was very sensitive to the whole picture of a gradual evolution in Eastern Europe and eager to contribute to its development to the extent that he could.

Q: Much is made of a policy difference between, say, the Africa bureau [Bureau of African Affairs] and the European bureau [Bureau of European Affairs] in the State Department. Is this also true between the East Europe and West Europe portions?

CRAWFORD: Well, each has its own area of concentration and...

Q: Yes, but what I'm after is, does it cause real problems in commopolicy?

CRAWFORD: It does often cause differences in approach, and there were similar differences between the Office of Soviet Affairs and the Office of Eastern European Affairs. However, the head of the bureau is assisted generally by a deputy assistant secretary combining Soviet and Eastern European background. At that time Dick Davis [Richard H. Davis], who succeeded me later in Romania, was in that position, and it was his job to reconcile what differences might arise between the Soviet and Eastern European offices. So we felt we had good support at the bureau level. But there was a whale of a difference between the bureau level and your man on the seventh floor who would come in with the authority and the confidence that Harriman showed. And of course this is further borne out by the fact that he was subsequently to head up the negotiations that led to our successful agreement with the Romanians.

Q: How well developed was the move towards raising the legation tembassy level?

CRAWFORD: Well, for us this was a rather minor part of the whole thing. On the other hand, the Romanians considered it far more important, because for them it was a prestige matter. Since the Soviets had ambassadors everywhere, they didn't want their envoys to be of subordinate rank. I guess the representative of the United States doesn't need to

have his prestige enhanced, whether he's down the protocol line a bit or not. So we used the issue as a come-on—an eventual reward for the satisfactory resolution of outstanding substantive questions. From our standpoint, the elevation to an embassy would follow naturally if everything else went right. But it was in that category that we put it.

Q: Did President Kennedy have a particular position on this?

CRAWFORD: On the raising? No, we didn't get into the questions of specific negotiations and so on. What we were really focusing on at that time was how we were going to get into the same boat with our European friends in pushing things along. What actually resulted was that we wound up with an agreement dealing largely with economic matters. It was really America's first major response in this field to an Eastern European nation since '56-'57, when we'd put Poland under special general license arrangements which enabled them to purchase more or less what they pleased without having to go for a particular license each time. We did the same thing for the Romanians, and also okayed some specific licenses on more sensitive installations—such as the rubber plants—that they were especially interested in. All this, in a sense, was sort of a tardy reward on our part for the many actions which they had been taking in asserting their independence of the Russians. So though they may have got more out of it than we, they had contributed more initially. But we did wind up with a few important benefits we had sought: agreements to negotiate a new consular convention and to expedite the reunion of separated families; and certain promises to facilitate the operation of our embassy through the acquisition of a new embassy building and residence if we wanted one, and the establishment of a U.S. trade office in downtown Bucharest. There were a few other things of that kind, but that's all in the public domain.

Q: Yes. Let me ask you this as sort of a closing question, I guess: How would you compare your experiences under the three administrations, Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower], Kennedy and Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson]? What stands out in your mind for each one?

CRAWFORD: Of a personal nature or...

Q: Personal or general policy, what have you, whatever occurs to you.

CRAWFORD: Well, I suppose under Eisenhower it was the strong role played by Secretary Dulles [John Foster Dulles] and the latter's very proprietary way of handling his own foreign affairs, so to speak, and the feeling, at least down the line, that you didn't have very much contact with the top echelons, nor was your advice greatly solicited. However, the Department worked along in its regular fashion, and of course, I was more junior then.

Q: I'm curious, and it's off my subject, but was there a difficult period of adjustment then when Dulles died and Herter [Christian A. Herter] took over?

CRAWFORD: No, not that I was particularly aware of... I think everything seemed a little more accessible under Herter. But what I felt most characterized the Kennedy administration was the personal relationship one felt somehow with the President. I'm not speaking about my own case here, although it happened that I was singled out and I don't know exactly why the President decided to do so. I was thinking more in terms of the effect his administration had on my office. As head of the Sino-Soviet research side, I was called upon to bring things more directly to the attention of the White House. And then there was the President's role in calling up the desk officer every so often. In other words, one had a great feeling of much closer direction and participation of the President in foreign policy.

Q: How many times do you know of that he actually called up the desofficer? This is part of the mythology.

CRAWFORD: That he actually did? I know it's part of the mythology. I was trying to think back, and I can't even recall one instance, now that you put it to me like that, although I had read of such. Have you found any instance?

Q: Not me personally.

CRAWFORD: No. I see. That's interesting.

Q: Everybody says it happened but nobody has really been able ttalk about it.

CRAWFORD: I think there was somebody in INR, but I just don't recall.

Q: In one or two other areas further down the line.

CRAWFORD: Yes. But then under Johnson there was a differenapproach.

Q: In what way different?

CRAWFORD: Well, different at least so far as I as ambassador was concerned. When our missions were raised to embassy, which was on June 1 of '64, it was stated in the published announcement that ambassadors would be exchanged at an early date. But I wasn't made an ambassador until the following December. This apparently was because, as Harriman told me, the President didn't want anything to come up with regard to Eastern Europe in the course of the election campaign of '64. Not even a routine matter of Senate approval, despite our agreement with Romania. He just didn't want to risk raising any problems of that kind. So, although the Romanian minister was appointed as ambassador almost immediately, I was left in charge of our embassy as a minister for six months, which is a bit irregular and discomfiting. But finally President Johnson came through after the elections, and Gheorghiu-Dej received me within twenty-four hours to present my new credentials. I guess he wanted to show his understanding for my time spent under such circumstances, as well as his appreciation for what we'd accomplished.

Q: Do you think he understood why this was delayed?

CRAWFORD: Oh, I think he did, because it has been explained to the Foreign Ministry. I was one of the last people that he saw because he died of cancer about three months later. The Romanians generally were extremely solicitous and thoughtful. At the time of

Kennedy's death, for example, their whole leadership happened to be in Belgrade visiting Tito [Marshal Tito]. But Dej promptly got in touch by phone with our charg# d'affaires in Belgrade, and personally expressed his condolences. And he told me of the sleepless night that he had spent sitting up with Tito speculating on, “What's going to happen now?” They were all frightfully disturbed by his death. And there was a deep feeling of concern over which way American policy was going to go. They feared the assassination might be viewed as not just the action of a single man but rather the product of a collective effort, or even as a Communist plot, which could have serious international consequences.

Q: This was the substance of a conversation between Dej and Tito?

CRAWFORD: Yes, that's right. Which Dej told me about when I presented my new credentials. Prime Minister Maurer and several other top leaders who were left in charge in Bucharest had come down to my office and called on me personally for the same purpose. They allowed me to speak on TV—which no American chief of mission had been allowed to do before—in order to present President Johnson's message on the occasion, which I was able to do in Romanian because I had learned the language. Then we held a memorial service in the British church, which I conducted and to which some members of the Romanian government came. Also the patriarch of Romania, and of course all the dip [diplomatic] corps, including, interestingly enough, all of the bloc chiefs of mission, down to the Outer Mongolian...

Q: Well, for heaven sake.

CRAWFORD: ...with whom we had no relations.

Q: And the Chinese?

CRAWFORD: And even the Chinese and the East German—I think they did. Because, as I recall, there wasn't one missing. They weren't real churchgoers either, these characters,

but mostly Central Committee members from their own parties. But the feeling of shock and general unease was very deep indeed.

Q: Okay. Is there anything else you'd like to add that occurs to you at this point? We've certainly covered all the ground that I had prepared.

CRAWFORD: Right. I can't think of anything offhand. I think we have covered this reasonably well.

Q: All right. Well, let me thank you very much then.

CRAWFORD: Not at all.

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Q: All right. Now, I had asked you if you had anything more and yoseemed to have some more.

CRAWFORD: Yes, I do. On second thought, there are two important subjects that I think we did not cover, although we touched on one very briefly. Both subjects served as background for my talks with the President and influenced the whole process of the decisions we took later in preparing for our talks with the Romanians and eventually in reaching agreement in '64.

Q: Would you like me to put that thing somewhere else so it isn'pointing at you like a mortar?

CRAWFORD: I think it's all right. Well, concurrently with Romania's move toward economic independence and closer ties with the West from '62 to '64 the Romanians had taken a number of specific steps to downgrade, if not eliminate, Russian influence throughout the country. So the first point I want to cover is the Romanian derussification campaign carried out internally; and then the second, the closer relations that were being

established with the U.S. during the same period when they were moving farther apart with the Russians.

You'll recall I had said that upon my arrival, Bucharest was still dominated by a giant statue of Stalin [Joseph V. Stalin], which on a dark night several months later was quietly removed. Well, there were a number of other significant things that were shortly to occur in terms of derussification. First of all, the Moscow-trained Romanians whom the Russians had placed in key positions in the internal security apparatus after the war, were soon got rid of. Then streets and villages which had been given Russian names after the war reverted to their original Romanian names.

Q: Did the removal extend exclusively to the internal security, owas this across the board?

CRAWFORD: No, this was mainly a question of the internal security apparatus. The Russian armed forces having already left in '58, the only other obvious Russian presence to remain was a small Russian military group connected with the Warsaw Pact. They were very inconspicuous—only some twenty or thirty of them—and though we saw certain steps taken by Romania to decrease its ties with the Warsaw Pact while I was there, no action to remove these particular people. That would have been a little too risky. The ones I'm speaking of who were removed were the Russian-trained NKVD [People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, USSR] types, who in some cases were actually Russian citizens who had been placed in the internal security apparatus which the Romanians were now proceeding to “Romanize.” Then there was the question of the Romanian alphabet. Romanian is a Latin language, and it does not have Cyrillic characters, but the same Roman characters that we have. But the Russians after the war had insisted on certain orthographic changes in the Romanian alphabet giving it a Slavic tone.

Q: Things like having a GH instead of a JE, new sounds?

CRAWFORD: A particular one was the Russian “i” which sounds a bilike the Romanian “a.”

Q: Our transcribers are going to have problems.CRAWFORD: For example, you take the name Romania, which is pronounced “Ro-mah-ne#-ah.” Now, when I arrived there, it was spelled R-O-M-I-N-I-A, as the Russians would have it. And during this period it was officially changed back to R-O-M-A—”Ro-mah”—the old Roman, in other words. And in fact, they sent us a formal note telling us so. You had these little changes, which were nevertheless symptomatic of a rising nationalism and downplaying of things Russian.

Along with this, the Romanians had only one foreign affairs review when I arrived, which was the Romanian edition of the Soviet periodical New Times. Then one bright day the subscribers to New Times were informed that from now on they would not be getting New Times any more, but something called Lumea—which means The World. So Lumea appeared with a very slick cover, something like Time, and it carried the Romanian slant on foreign affairs. It was a much more open forum type of thing, and if it still basically followed the Communist line, it was their own international affairs periodical, and you would find in it articles from correspondents all over the world, including such people as Scotty Reston [James B. Reston] and Cy Sulzberger [Cyrus L. Sulzberger]. In fact, you'd see some entire reprints of their articles from the New York Times. And in some cases you even got President Johnson's [Lyndon B. Johnson]—I believe this was after President Kennedy died—statements in extenso; the kind of things that had never appeared before. It was a much livelier and very interesting publication which drew rather extensively from the non-Communist press of the free world, as well as from other Communist publications.

Q: Was this publication simply a matter of taking a Western idea oformat and so on...

CRAWFORD: Only in small part.

Q: ...and doing it indigenously, or was there some advice from thWest?

CRAWFORD: I doubt there was any advice, but they followed the format a bit. In other words, they wanted to provide their own tribune, if you will, for a broader exchange of ideas and a much greater variety of opinion than anything that could have come out of a straight Moscow publication. So this innovation occurred with little fanfare, but it made a considerable impression.

Then the Romanian-Soviet Friendship Society was all but abolished. And the Soviets had a bookshop in Bucharest called the International Bookstore which one day was renamed the Romanian-Soviet Bookstore, and then shortly afterwards was closed down. And the Russian language, which had been obligatory in the schools since 1945, was made elective in '63. And almost instantly, French began outstripping Russian in the classroom, and there was a great upsurge in the teaching of English. And the Romanians began to take occasional positions at the UN [United Nations} that were different from those of the Russians or of the bloc as a whole.

Q: I recall the vote on the nuclear-free Latin America.

CRAWFORD: That's right. Yes, that was one of their positions, and for a nuclear-free zone in the Balkans. So here they were asserting themselves. And another very cautious but interesting step they took was with regard to Bessarabia. Now, Bessarabia, as you may recall, was Romanian irredenta, which had been added to Romania's territory at Russia's expense at the end of World War I. And then it was reannexed by Russia after World War II, and it became the Moldavian Socialist Republic, one of the sixteen Soviet republics. But the Romanians preferred to be very quiet about this—because they didn't want any particular trouble. At the same time, they still considered Bessarabia to be Romanian, which it largely is in language, etc.

So one day the Romanians tried quite a ploy; they republished an old manuscript of Karl Marx which they had found, and which had apparently first appeared back around 1850. It had never issued from a Russian publishing house, but from somewhere in Holland.

Anyway, this publication expressed Marx's view on the whole question of Bessarabia, in which he took the position that Bessarabia was Romanian and not Russian. And so this suddenly appeared in deadpan fashion with a preface by a Romanian academician. The preface didn't try to prove anything; it was very guarded, merely noting that here was an interesting pamphlet of Marx's which had not appeared in the Soviet Union. Well, of course, it sold out promptly, and when it came out again a few days later in a new edition, it sold out again.

This was characteristic of the Romanian approach towards derussification. They would take a rather risky and courageous step of this kind, but they'd do so in low key. In this case, there was no particular polemic or echo in the Romanian press, although the Russian historians did respond with denunciations. But it placed the Russians in a very embarrassing position. I suppose what the Romanians were really trying to do as discreetly as possible, was to document their own case for the ultimate day when there might be some territorial revisions across the board. After all, the Chinese had been challenging Russia's long borders with them and advancing tremendous claims. So, in the Romanian view, perhaps, if there were ever to be some kind of a showdown on such questions, she might as well have Marx on her side. She didn't push it too hard; but it's just another illustration of the national trend at the expense of the Russians that was developing at the time.

Q: You're talking about them being rather deadpan and subtle with the Russians. How were they talking about these things to you? Was it equally deadpan or...

CRAWFORD: It was equally deadpan, yes.

Q: No winks on the side, that sort of thing?

CRAWFORD: Well, hardly, because they had to be very, very careful about it. But the face of the Soviet ambassador was growing longer and longer. Their position was then as it still is: “We want good relations with everybody, and we're not going to go out of

our way to offend people." Although they didn't want to create unnecessary trouble for themselves, they were moving step by step towards a national posture in their relations with the Russians to counter the effects of Russian intervention in all its aspects since the take-over.

Q: In this kind of situation, when you have to talk to the Russiaambassador, what sort of things do you say to each other?

CRAWFORD: Well, we got along famously, as a matter of fact, because I speak Russian and had served in Moscow. It so happens that all of the bloc ambassadors also spoke Russian. So when they got together, that's what they spoke. And consequently I was able to join in many of their impromptu discussions very informally without need of any assistance. As I say, my relations with the Russian ambassador were extremely good, and we would jolly each other a good deal. But we usually avoided discussing the Romanian scene, which was going poorly for him. Fortunately, he had a good sense of humor, and personally we hit it off, though he was well aware that our working relations with the Romanians were constantly improving. Those with the bloc countries were also generally good throughout the period—except at the time of the missile crisis when things got rather strained and people promptly divided off into two camps.

Q: It's a bit of a tangent, but will you pursue that for a momenand sort of describe the atmosphere at the time?

CRAWFORD: Well, I vividly recall one particular day when we were reaching a point of real crisis. And I remember that I and the other chiefs of mission were out at the airport to see somebody arrive or depart. And normally I would greet the Russian and the Czech, and so on, just as I'd see some of our own NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] friends; perhaps not with quite the same warmth, but we would always exchange amenities. When I arrived on this occasion Zhegalin [I. K. Zhegalin], the Soviet ambassador, was already surrounded by his own group; and all the Western

representatives and most of the neutrals immediately came over to me. The atmosphere was electric, and it was quite obvious that things were polarizing. Only the Yugoslav ambassador was moving back and forth, not being quite sure which one he should be with.

Q: How did the missile crisis first come to your attention?

CRAWFORD: I'm trying to recall. I remember I had to leave a note with the Romanian Foreign Ministry early in the game which set forth our own plans with regard to control of the seas and establishing an embargo of Soviet vessels approaching Cuba. I left our note with the Romanians, and after reading it they became very upset, but at least they accepted it. About two hours later, however, they sent the note back. And then I learned that the Russians had refused to accept an identical note delivered in Moscow. So the Romanians had followed suit somewhat belatedly, and probably reluctantly.

Q: How did you get this reluctance? Why do you say that?

CRAWFORD: Well, we heard more about the reluctance later. At some point during or shortly after the crisis, we got echoes of the Romanian attitude. Evidently they regarded the whole affair as a contest between two big bulls on which they hadn't been consulted and in which they had no desire to become involved. They didn't want to be caught in the middle of something for which they weren't responsible. And later in his talk with Freeman [Orville L. Freeman], Gheorghiu-Dej [Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej] used this same illustration. In our subsequent discussions with high Romanian officials it became clearer than ever that they had not been taken into the confidence of the Russians nor been given any inkling of their plans to install missiles in Cuba. They had soon recognized that they were merely pawns in a Soviet power play, if you will. I think this rude awakening greatly strengthened the nationalist tendency they were already manifesting, and as they thought back upon it, they grew increasingly determined not to get themselves involved in this kind of a situation again if they possibly could.

Q: It reinforced the whole derussification idea.

CRAWFORD: That's right, it did, because they had not been consulted and probably believed the Russian claims when first made about no missile emplacements in Cuba. When they found that the Russians were playing a nasty game with their own destiny, I think they felt betrayed: first, by not being privy to their confidence, and second, by seeing the Russians acting so irresponsibly in risking the fate of the whole world, including Romania. So for them the lesson of the missile crisis dovetailed nicely with their derussification campaign.

Meanwhile, our own relations with Romania were doing quite well indeed. If we go back first to shortly before my arrival, we'd already reached an agreement in 1960 with Romania on outstanding financial claims of U.S. nationals, and Romania had agreed to pay us a twenty-five million dollar lump sum settlement. So this was out of the way. And at the same time we had agreed to allow the Romanians to set up a trade office in New York, which they proceeded to do. And then, in 1961, the Romanians and ourselves signed a two-year cultural accord, which was the only one of its kind that we had at that time with any Eastern European country other than the Soviet Union itself. This was a two-year cultural understanding providing for exchanges of students and professors and scientists, for performing artists, books, radio, TV programs, exhibits, motion pictures, and athletic groups, and so on. And these arrangements were then renegotiated every two years. The first arrangement applied for the period of '61-'62, and then I renegotiated one at the end of '62-early '63, which applied to the period '63-'64, and we've renegotiated them regularly ever since. They provided a framework in which we were able to present three exhibits during the period that I was in Bucharest: one, a plastics exhibit; one, a transportation exhibit; and one was a graphic arts exhibit. We were able to get two American professors to teach in Romanian universities, one at the University of Bucharest and one at the University of Cluj. They came over with their families, and they taught American literature. All this was a good thing, and in the right direction.

Then in early 1963, at the conclusion of the negotiation of our agreement for '63-'64, the legation was allowed by the Romanians to publish a cultural bulletin and also a scientific bulletin—two bulletins—to be circulated to some five or six hundred Romanian individuals and institutions of our choice in the cultural and scientific world. These bulletins dealt with American developments in both fields, and they appeared about once a month in the Romanian language and have continued to this day. And I understand that they now have a circulation of about a thousand each. We considered this was something of an achievement, and I think it's had a worthwhile effect.

We also pressed for the setting up of an American library in Bucharest, to which the Romanians finally gave us their agreement in principle. This was something that was subsequently implemented when President Nixon [Richard M. Nixon] visited Bucharest in 1969. Immediately following his visit, an agreement was formally signed for the setting up of such a library. So things have moved considerably since my time, but they've moved steadily in the direction of much closer cultural ties. These cultural understandings and the steps that we took in furthering a certain cultural rapport between the two countries were useful not only in encouraging new ideas, but probably their greatest usefulness lay in fostering a habit of good working relations between us. You can agree on cultural things much more easily than you can on political and economic matters. But having achieved a good working rapport in this field, I found it very useful when the time came to expand into more substantive areas. Because they had grown used to working with us constructively on such matters, they developed a certain confidence in their dealings with us, which then proved helpful in other areas. So there was all this.

I should also mention the establishment of an American school there during that time. Most of our missions in Eastern Europe had run such schools for some years, all primary schools, except the one in Yugoslavia which went a little higher—the first six or eight grades, in other words. Well, we didn't have one in Bucharest when I arrived, nor was there one in Sofia [Bulgaria]; these were the only two capitals where they were lacking.

So in the fall of 1962, I persuaded some legation families to join together and set up a six-grade school (later raised to eight). We had procured the necessary texts and supplies. The wife of an attache who was a professional teacher took on the job of heading it. Then we asked the Romanians for their cooperation in providing a second teacher. And they were glad to send us a very charming young Romanian woman who was a graduate of the pedagogical institute, and whose English was exceedingly good, to teach at our school. So we began with six students of our own, and by the end of the first semester, things were going so well that we took in a few more, this time children from the diplomatic corps with background in English. I should mention that the only foreign school in Bucharest at the time was the Soviet Embassy school. So we wound up the year with fourteen students, and the next year we had thirty-some to begin the school year. The Romanians meanwhile had arranged to provide us with the whole building, where we had previously occupied a single apartment. It had a lovely court and happened to be not far from our legation. So they not only provided us with a teacher that year—and then with another—but agreed to make the whole building available to us for school purposes. I understand the school is still in those premises and now has some sixty students. And so we also got very good cooperation from the Romanians in this effort.

I mentioned some of these things to the President in the course of my talk with him in August of '63, and although the major part of our talk was devoted to the economic side, I did outline for his general background the troubles the Russians had been running into and the good working relations which we had been developing.

Q: Let me ask you this. In the fairly nice progression oincreasing rapport...

CRAWFORD: Yes.

Q: ...I assume this means that your military attaches, your political reporting people, CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] types and covert activities had to be exceedingly low profile. Do you have any problem controlling this?

CRAWFORD: No, I didn't have much of a problem with that. Our military did have to keep a low profile, but I didn't have any real gung-ho types.

Q: Nobody trying to penetrate the apparatus and that kind of thing?

CRAWFORD: No, no. And so far as any CIA outside activities are concerned, they were off base there, and there was nothing that could have happened without my first being informed about it. We were strictly not to rock the boat in any sense. There was to be no activity of any kind with regard to recruitment or anything of that sort. In other words, anything of a CIA operational nature outside the embassy premises was proscribed. We wanted to make sure that we did maintain a low profile and allowed this good working relationship to develop. So fortunately there wasn't any real problem with that.

Now I might add just one thing further that I think was not touched upon. When we discussed the President's memo of September 19 [1963], in which he called for the elaboration of certain guidelines to be drawn up with respect to further trade with Eastern Europe, the follow-up on that was that these guidelines were actually being drawn up when the President's death occurred. They finally appeared in mid-December in the form of a paper establishing general guidelines for trade with Eastern Europe as a whole, and attached to it, another paper, which was an action program for Romania. The latter laid the groundwork for the discussions we were soon to have with the Romanians. So I think the talk that I had with the President, followed by the strong position that he took in his September memo, along with the fact that the Romanians were continuing to assert a more independent stance than any other Eastern European country, did substantially result in an action program for Romania being drawn up as a one-country paper...

Q: The only...

CRAWFORD: Yes, as the only country paper, along with the general onfor Eastern Europe as a whole.

Q: Did this become a model for later ones?

CRAWFORD: It probably did, although of that I'm not really sure. But the policy guidelines which appeared December 17 set forth general principles and a certain scenario for the use of expanded trade with Eastern Europe as a means of advancing our objectives there when developments in individual countries warranted. Then the action program for Romania carried a specific set of proposals which, as I say, were used as a basis for our subsequent negotiating position. All of this was then approved by President Johnson in February of '64, but the groundwork was first laid at the initiative, really, and under the great personal impetus of President Kennedy for the later success of the talks.

It's instructive to note that as the time for the talks approached, the Romanian differences with the Russians became intensified. The Romanians, for example, were invited to Khrushchev's [Nikita S. Khrushchev] seventieth birthday party—this is, Dej was invited—in April of '64, and instead of going, Dej abstained and convened his Central Committee. In other words, he chose to hold a long Central Committee meeting precisely during the four or five days when the Khrushchev birthday celebrations were going on, to issue what amounted to a proclamation of political independence. He had already asserted their economic independence in 1963. But this statement went farther and took the Russians to task for having interfered in the past in Romanian Communist party affairs to a considerable degree, and it established the principle that there should be no father-son parties but only brother parties, and so on. So this was more or less the culmination of the derussification campaign. And it was only about two or three weeks later, on May 18, that the Romanians arrived over here, to cap the climax if you will. It was really a pretty risky business to have taunted the Russians to the extent that they had by their Central Committee statement and Dej's refusal to go to the birthday party when all the other Eastern European leaders were going, and then to follow that up by sending a high-level delegation to Washington for the important talks that we proceeded to have with them. A very risky and ticklish business, indeed.

Q: All right. Later, of course, you have the Czech experience thais in our background now, but wasn't then. Why the difference...

CRAWFORD: Why the difference?

Q: ...in the two experiences?

CRAWFORD: Yes, why the Russians moved into...

Q: Yes, why were the Romanians able to get away with it and thCzechs not?

CRAWFORD: Well, I think that there are a couple of good reasons. One is that the Romanians maintained an internal position which was fairly orthodox. They didn't challenge the basic Communist system. In fact, their internal controls were still rather Stalinist. Liberalization of ideas and so on had not developed internally as they had in Czechoslovakia. The party maintained tight internal controls. There was no such thing as relaxation of censorship as there had been in Czechoslovakia. There was no such thing as the possibility arising of a fractional movement within the party, or of two candidates for an election. They, on the contrary, remained very orthodox. So the Russians did not have any fear that the system itself was being challenged by the Romanians, even though they were going much farther than anybody else in differing with the Russians on foreign affairs and were asserting a strong posture of economic and, to a degree, political independence vis-a-vis the Russians. But the second point is that even in foreign affairs they recognized what the Russians couldn't tolerate, and they set strict limits. Above all, the Romanians were very careful not to give any impression that they might do what the Hungarians had done, which was to move out of the Warsaw Pact. They were very careful about this, and about not challenging the system itself. So I think that where the Romanians and the Czechs parted ways was that there was a much higher degree of liberalization actively developing in Czechoslovakia, which I think the Russians were afraid might lap over among their Communist neighbors and possibly into the Soviet Union itself. In particular,

I believe they feared the possible effects of Czech intellectual ferment upon the already somewhat imaginative Russian younger generation. Well, there was little of that kind of intellectual excitement to upset the Russians in Romania. There was no more than a very guarded movement towards greater liberalization at the time, and the party was well in control.

Q: Didn't reckon with anything as subversive as discotheques.[Laughter]

CRAWFORD: That's right.

Q: I think that's about it.

CRAWFORD: Yes. End of interview